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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

&
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

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No. 340. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 1875.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A CHARMING FELLOW.

BY FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE.

AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE," "MABEL'S PROGRESS," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XVII.

ALGERNON was elated by the success of his song, and by Lady Seely's full acknowledgment of his cousinship, and he left the mansion in Mayfair in very good spirits, as has been said. But when he got back to his inn—a private hotel in a dingy street behind Oxford-street—he began to feel a recurrence of the disappointment which had oppressed him, when Lady Seely had declared so emphatically that my lord could do nothing for him, in the way of getting him a place. What was to be done? It was all very well for his mother to say that, with his talents and appearance, he must and would make his way to a high position; but, just and reasonable as it would be that his talents and appearance should give him success, he began to fear that they might not altogether avail to do so. He thought of Mr. Filthorpe—that substance, which Mr. Diamond had said they were deserting for the shadow of Seely—and of the thousands of pounds which the Bristol merchant possessed. Truly a stool in a counting-house was not the post which Algernon coveted. And he candidly told himself that he should not be able to fill it effectively. But, still, there would have been at least as good a chance of fascinating Mr. Filthorpe as of fascinating Lord Seely, and the looked-for result of the fascination in either case was to be absolution from the necessity of doing any disagreeable work whatever. And, more-

over, Mr. Filthorpe, at all events, would have supplied board and lodging and a small salary, whilst he was undergoing the process of being fascinated.

Algernon looked thoughtful and anxious, for full a quarter of an hour, as he pondered these things. But then he fell into a fit of laughter at the recollection of Lady Seely and Fido. "There is something very absurd about that old woman," said he to himself. "She is so impudent! And why wear a wig at all, if a wig is to be such a one as hers? A turban or a skull-cap would do just as well to cover her head with. But then they wouldn't be half so funny. Fido is something like his mistress—nearly as fat, and with the same style of profile."

Then he set himself to draw a caricature representing Fido, attired after the fashion of Lady Seely, and became quite cheerful and buoyant over it.

In the interval between the day of his visit to the Seelys and the Thursday on which he was to dine with them, Algernon made one or two calls, and delivered a couple of letters of introduction, with which his Whitford friends had furnished him. One was from Dr. Bodkin to an old-fashioned solicitor, who was reputed to be rich, but who lived in a very quiet way, in a very quiet square, and gave very quiet little dinners to a select few who could appreciate a really fine glass of port. The other letter was to a sister of young Mr. Pawkins, of Pudcombe Hall, married to the chief clerk of the Admiralty, who lived in a fashionable neighbourhood, and gave parties as fashionable as her visiting-list permitted, and by no means desired any special connoisseurship in wine on the part of her guests.

On the occasion of his first calls, Algernon found neither Mr. Leadbeater, the solicitor, nor Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs (that was the name of young Pawkins's sister) at home. So he left his letters and cards, and wandered about the streets in a rather forlorn way; for, although it was his first visit to London, it was not possible for him to get much enjoyment out of the metropolis, all alone. To him every place, even London, appeared in the light of a stage or background, whereon that supremely interesting personage, himself, might figure to more or less advantage. Now London is a big theatre. And although a big theatre full of spectators may be very exhilarating to the object of public attention who performs in it, a big theatre, practically barren of spectators—for, of course, the only real spectators are the spectators who look at *us*—is apt to oppress the mind with a sense of desertion. So he was very glad when Thursday evening came, and he found himself once more within the hall-door of Lord Seely's house.

My lord was in the drawing-room alone, standing on the hearth-rug. He shook hands very kindly with Algernon, and bade him come near to the fire and warm himself, for the evening was cold.

"And what have you been doing with yourself, Mr. Errington?" asked Lord Seely.

"I have been chiefly employed to-day in losing myself and asking my way," answered Algernon, laughing. And then he began an account of his adventures, and absolutely surprised himself by the amount of fun and sparkle he contrived to elicit from the narration of circumstances, which had been in fact dull and commonplace enough.

My lord was greatly amused, and once even laughed out loud at Algernon's imitation of an Irish apple-woman, who had misdirected him with the best intentions, and much calling down of blessings on his handsome face, in return for a silver sixpence.

"Capital!" said my lord, nodding his head up and down.

"The sixpence was badly invested, though," observed Algernon, "for she sent me about three miles out of my way."

"Ah, but the blarney! You forget the blessing and the blarney. Surely they were worth the money, eh?"

"No, my lord; not to me. I can't afford expensive luxuries."

Lady Seely, when she entered the room, gorgeous in pea-green satin, which singularly set off the somewhat pronounced tone of her rouge, found Algy and my lord laughing together very merrily, and, as she gave her hand to her young relative, demanded to be informed what the joke was.

Now it has been said that Algernon was possessed of wonderfully rapid powers of perception, and by sundry signs, so slight that they would have entirely escaped most observers, this clever young gentleman perceived that my lady was not altogether delighted, at finding her husband and himself on such easy and pleasant terms together. In fact, my lady, with all her blunt careless jollity of manner and pleasant, mellow voice, was apt to be both jealous and suspicious. She was jealous of her ascendancy over Lord Seely, who was said by the ill-natured to be completely under his wife's thumb, and she was suspicious of most strangers—especially of strangers who might be expected to want anything of his lordship. And she usually assumed that such persons would endeavour to "come over" that nobleman, when he was apart from his wife's protecting influence. She had a general theory that "men might be humbugged into anything;" and a particular experience that Lord Seely, despite his stiff carriage and abrupt manner, was in truth far softer-natured than she was herself.

"That young scamp has been coming over Valentine with his jokes and his flummery," said my lady to herself. "He's an Ancram, every inch of him."

At that very moment Algernon was mentally declaring that the conquest of my lady would, after all, be a more difficult matter than that of my lord; but that, by some means or other, the conquest must be made, if any good was to come to him from the Seely connection. And a stream of easy chat flowed over these underlying intentions and hid them, except that here and there, perhaps, a bubble or an eddy told of rough places out of sight.

After some ten minutes of desultory talk, my lady was obliged to own to herself that the "young scamp" had a wonderfully good manner. Without a trace of servility, he was respectful; conveying, with perfect tact, exactly the sort of homage that was graceful and becoming from a youth like himself to persons of the Seelys' age and position. Neither did he commit the error of becoming familiar, in

response to Lady Seely's tone of familiarity, a pitfall which had before now entrapped the unwary. For my lady, whom Nature had created vulgar—having possibly, in the hurry of business, mistaken one kind of clay for another, and put some low person's mind into the fine porcelain of an undoubted Ancram—was fond of asserting her position in the world by a rough unceremoniousness in the first place, and a very wide-eyed arrogance in the second place, if such unceremoniousness chanced to be reciprocated by unauthorised persons.

"Do we wait for any one, Belinda?" asked Lord Seely.

"The Dormers are coming. They're such great musicians, you know. And I want Lady Harriet to hear this boy sing. And then there may be Jack Price, very likely."

"Very likely?" said my lord, raising his eyebrows and stiffening his back. "Doesn't Mr. Price do us the honour of saying positively whether he will come or not?"

"Oh, you know what Jack Price is. He says he'll come, and nine times out of ten he don't come; and then the tenth time he comes, and people have to put up with him."

My lord cleared his throat significantly, as who should say that he, at all events, did not feel inclined to put up with this system of tithes in the fulfilment of Mr. Jack Price's promises.

"If he comes," said Lady Seely, addressing Algernon, "you'll have to walk in to dinner by yourself. I've only got one young lady; and, if Jack comes, he must have her."

"Where is Castalia?" asked my lord.

"Oh, I suppose she's dressing. Castalia is always the slowest creature at her toilet I ever knew."

Algernon had read up the family genealogy in the "Peerage," under his mother's instructions, sufficiently to be aware that Lord and Lady Seely were childless, having lost their only son in a boating accident years ago. "Castalia," then, could not be a daughter of the house. Who was she? A young lady who was evidently at present living with the Seelys, whom they called by her Christian name, and who was habitually a long time at her toilet! Algernon felt a little agreeable excitement and curiosity on the subject of the tardy Castalia.

The door was thrown open. "Here she

comes!" thought Algernon, settling his cravat as he threw a quick side glance at a mirror.

"General and Lady Harriet Dormer," announced the servant.

There entered a tall elegant woman, leaning on the arm of a short, stout, benevolent-looking man in spectacles. To these personages Algernon was duly presented, being introduced, much to his gratification, by Lady Seely, as "A young cousin of mine, Mr. Ancram Errington, who has just come to town." Then, having made his bow to General Dormer, who smiled and shook hands with him, Algernon stood opposite to the graceful Lady Harriet, and was talked to very kindly and pleasantly, and felt extremely content with himself and his surroundings. Nevertheless he watched with some impatience for the appearance of "Castalia;" and forgot his usual self-possession so far, as to turn his head, and break off in the middle of a sentence he was uttering to Lady Harriet, when he heard the door open again. But once more he was disappointed; for, this time, dinner was announced, and Lord Seely offered his arm to Lady Harriet and led the way out of the room.

"No Jack!" said Lady Seely, as she passed out before Algernon. "And no Castalia!" said my lord over his shoulder, in a tone of vexation.

Algernon followed his seniors alone; but just as he got out on to the staircase there appeared a lady, leisurely descending from an upper floor, at whom Lord Seely looked up reproachfully.

"Late, late, Castalia!" said he, and shook his head solemnly.

"Oh no, Uncle Valentine; just in time," replied the lady.

"Castalia, take Ancram's arm, and do let us get to dinner before the soup is cold," said Lady Seely. "Give your arm to Miss Kilfinane, and come along." And her ladyship's pea-green satin swept downstairs after Lady Harriet's sober purple draperies. Algernon bowed, and offered his arm to the lady beside him; she placed her hand on it almost without looking at him, and they entered the dining-room without having exchanged a word.

The dining-room was better lighted than the staircase, and Algernon took an early opportunity of looking at his companion. She was not very young, being, in fact, nearly thirty, but looking older. Neither was she handsome. She was very thin, sallow, and sickly-looking, with a small

round face, not wrinkled, but crumpled, as it were, into queer, fretful lines. Her eyes were bright and well-shaped, but deeply sunken, and she had a great deal of thick, pale-brown hair, worn in huge bows and festoons on the top of her head, according to the extreme of the mode of that day. Her dress displayed more than it was judicious to display, in an æsthetic point of view, of very lean shoulders, and was of a bright, soft, pink hue, that would have been trying to the most blooming complexion. Altogether, the Honourable Castalia Kilfinane's appearance was disappointing, and her manner was not so attractive as to make up for lack of beauty. Her face expressed a mixture of querulousness and hauteur, and she spoke in a languid drawl, with strange peevish inflections.

"You and I ought to be some sort of relations to each other, oughtn't we?" said Algernon, having taken in all the above particulars in a series of rapid observations.

"Why?" returned the lady, without raising her eyes from her soup-plate.

"Because you are Lady Seely's niece and I am her cousin."

"Who says that I am Lady Seely's niece?"

"I thought," stammered Algernon, "I fancied—you called Lord Seely 'Uncle Valentine?'"

Even his equanimity, and a certain glow of complacency he felt at finding himself where he was, were a little disturbed by Miss Castalia's freezing manner.

"I am Lord Seely's niece," returned she.

Then, after a little pause, having finished her soup, she leaned back in her chair and stared at Algernon, who pretended—not quite successfully—to be unconscious of her scrutiny. Apparently, the result of it was favourable to Algernon; for the lady's manner thawed perceptibly, and she began to talk to him. She had evidently heard of him from Lady Seely, and understood the exact degree of his relationship to that great lady.

"Did you ever meet the Dormers before?" asked Miss Kilfinane.

"Never. How should I? You know I am the merest country mouse. I never was in London in my life, until last Friday."

"Oh, but the Dormers don't live in town. Indeed, they are here very seldom. You might have met them; their place is in the West of England."

Algernon, after a rapid balancing of pros and cons, resolved to be absolutely candid. With his brightest smile and most arched eyebrows, he began to give Miss Kilfinane an almost unvarnished description of his life at Whitford. Almost unvarnished; but it is no more easy to tell the simple truth only occasionally, than it is to stand quite upright only occasionally. Mind and muscles will fall back to their habitual posture. So that it may be doubted whether Miss Kilfinane received an accurate notion of the precise degree of poverty and obscurity in which the young man who was speaking to her had hitherto lived.

"And so," said she, "you have come to London to——"

"To seek my fortune," said Algernon merrily. "It is the proper and correct beginning to a story. And I think I have had a piece of good luck at the very outset by way of a good omen."

Miss Kilfinane opened her eyes interrogatively, but said nothing.

"I think it was a piece of luck for me," continued Algernon, emboldened by having secured the scornful lady's attention, and perhaps a little also by the wine he had drunk, "a great piece of good luck that Mr. Jack Price, whoever he may be, did not turn up this evening."

"Why?"

"Because, if he had, I should not have been allowed the honour of bringing you in to dinner."

"Oh yes! I should have had to go in with Jack, I suppose," answered the lady with a little smile.

"Please, Miss Kilfinane, who is Jack Price? I do so want to know!"

"Jack Price is Lord Mullingar's son."

"But what is he? And why do people want to have him so much, that they put up with his disappointing them nine times out of ten?"

"As to what he is—well, he was in the Guards, and he gave that up. Then they got him a place somewhere—in Africa, or South America, or somewhere—and he gave that up. Then he got the notion that he would be a farmer in Canada, and went out with an axe to cut down the trees, and a plough to plough the ground afterwards, and he gave that up. Now he does nothing particular."

"And has he found his vocation at last?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Miss Kilfinane, languidly. Her power of perceiving a joke was very limited.

"Thanks. Now I know all about Mr. Price; except—except why everybody wants to invite him."

"That I really cannot tell you."

"Then you don't share the general enthusiasm about him?"

"I don't know that there is any general enthusiasm. Only, of course—don't you know how it is?—people have got into the way of putting up with him, and letting him do as he likes."

"He's a very fortunate young man, I should say."

"Young man!" Miss Kilfinane laughed a hard little laugh. "Why Jack Price is ever so old!"

"Ever so old, is he?" echoed Algernon, genuinely surprised.

"He must be turned forty," said the fair Castalia, rising in obedience to a look from Lady Seely. And if she had been but fifteen herself, she could not have said it with a more infantine air.

After the ladies had withdrawn, Algernon had to sit for about twenty minutes in the shade, as it were, silent, and listening with modesty and discretion to the conversation of his seniors. Had they talked politics, Algernon would have been able to throw in a word or two; but Lord Seely and his guest talked, not of principles or party, but of persons. The persons talked of were such as Lord Seely conceived to be useful or hostile to his party, and he discussed their conduct, and criticised the tactics of ministers in regard to them, with much warmth. But, unfortunately, Algernon neither knew, nor could pretend to know, anything about these individuals, so he sipped his wine, and looked at the family portraits which hung round the room, in silence.

My lord made a kind of apology to him, as they were going upstairs to the drawing-room.

"I'm afraid you were bored, Mr. Errington. I am sorry, for your sake, that Mr. Price did not honour us with his company. You would have found him much more amusing than us old fogies."

Algernon knew, when Lord Seely talked of Mr. Price not having honoured them with his company, that my lord was indignant against that gentleman. "I have no doubt that Mr. Price is a very agreeable person," said he, "but I did not regret him, my lord. I thought it a great privilege to be allowed to listen to you."

Later in the evening, Algy overheard Lord Seely say to General Dormer, "He's

a remarkably intelligent young fellow, I assure you."

"He has a capital manner," returned the general. "There is something very taking about him, indeed."

"Oh yes, manner; yes; a very good manner—but there's more judgment, more solidity about him than appears on the surface."

Meanwhile, Algernon went on flourishingly, and ingratiated himself with every one. He steered his way, with admirable tact, past various perils, such as must inevitably threaten one who aims at universal popularity. Lady Harriet was delighted with his singing, and Lady Harriet's expressed approbation pleased Lady Seely; for the Dormers were considered to be great musical connoisseurs, and their judgment had considerable weight among their own set. Their own set further supposed that the verdict of the Dormers was important to professional artists: a delusion which the givers of second-rate concerts, who depended on Lady Harriet to get rid of many seven-and-sixpenny tickets during the season, were at no pains to disturb. Then, Algernon took the precaution to keep away from Lord Seely, and to devote himself to my lady, during the remainder of the evening. This behaviour had so good an effect, that she called him "Ancram," and bade him go and talk to Castalia, who was sitting alone on a distant ottoman, with a distinctly sour expression of countenance.

"How did you get on with Castalia at dinner?" asked my lady.

"Miss Kilfinane was very kind to me, ma'am."

"Was she? Well, she don't make herself agreeable to everybody, so consider yourself honoured. Castalia's a very clever girl. She can draw, make wax flowers, and play the piano beautifully."

"Can she really? Will she play to-night?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Go and ask her."

"May I?"

"Yes; be off!"

Miss Kilfinane did not move or raise her eyes when Algernon went and stood before her.

"I have come with a petition," he said, after a little pause.

"Have you?"

"Yes; will you play to-night?"

"No."

"Oh, that's very cruel! I wish you would!"

"I don't like playing before the Dormers. They set up for being such connoisseurs, and I hate that kind of thing."

"I am sure you can have no reason to fear their criticism."

"I don't want to have my performance picked to pieces in that knowing sort of way. I play for my own amusement, and I don't want to be criticised, and applauded, and patronised."

"But how can people help applauding when you play? Lady Seely says you play exquisitely."

"Did she tell you to ask me to play?"

"Not exactly. But she said I might ask you."

At this moment General Dormer came up, and said, with his most benevolent smile, "Won't you give us a little music, Miss Kilfinane? Some Beethoven, now! I see a volume of his sonatas on the piano."

"I hate Beethoven," returned Miss Kilfinane.

"Hate Beethoven! No, no, you don't. It's quite impossible! A pianist like you! Oh no, Miss Kilfinane, it is out of the question."

"Yes, I do. I hate all classical music, and the sort of stuff that people talk about it."

The general smiled again, shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and walked away.

"Miss Kilfinane, you are ferociously cruel!" said Algernon under his breath as General Dormer turned his back on them. The little fear he had had of Castalia's chilly manner and ungracious tongue had quite vanished. Algernon was not apt to be in awe of any one. And he certainly was not in awe of Castalia Kilfinane. "Why did you tell the general that you hated Beethoven?" he went on saucily.

"I'm quite sure you don't hate Beethoven!"

"I hate all the kind of professional jargon which the Dormers affect about music. Music is all very well, but it isn't our business, any more than tailoring or millinery is our business. To hear the Dormers talk, you would think it the most important matter in the world to decide whether this fiddler is better than that fiddler, or what is the right time to play a fugue of Bach's in."

"I'm such an ignoramus that I'm afraid I don't even know with any precision what a fugue of Bach's is!" said Algernon, ingenuously. He thought he had learned to understand Miss Castalia. Nevertheless, when, later in the evening, Lady

Harriet asked him in her pretty silver tones, "And do you, too, hate classical music, Mr. Errington?" he professed the most unbounded love and reverence for the great masters. "I have had few opportunities of hearing fine music, Lady Harriet," said he; "but it is the thing I have longed for all my life." Whereupon Lady Harriet, much pleased at the prospect of such a disciple, invited him to go to her house every Saturday morning, when he would hear some of the best performers in London execute some of the best music. "I only ask real listeners," said Lady Harriet. "We are just a few music-lovers who take the thing very much au sérieux."

On the whole, when Algernon thought over his evening, sitting over the fire in his bedroom at the inn, he acknowledged to himself that he had been successful. "Lady Seely is the toughest customer, though! What a fish-wife she looks beside that elegant Lady Harriet! But she can put on airs of a great lady too, when she likes. It's a very fine line that divides dignity from impudence. Take her wig off, wash her face, and clothe her in a short cotton gown with a white apron, and how many people would know that Belinda, Lady Seely, had ever been anything but a cook, or the landlady of a public-house? Well, I think I am cleverer than any of 'em. And, after all, that's a great point." With which comfortable reflection Algernon Ancram Errington went to bed, and to sleep.

ENGLISH CATHEDRALS.

BATH.

ACCORDING to the mendacious old chroniclers, Bath was founded by the discoverer of the medicinal hot-wells, King Bladud, a disciple of Pythagoras, generally known as "the Hypoborean priest of Apollo and the founder of the great university of the Druids." According to Dr. Jones, in his "Bathes of Bathes Ayde," Bladud was the thirtieth in direct descent from Adam; but less imaginative antiquaries trace him from Brutus, and make him the ninth in descent from the great grandson of Æneas.

This young prince Bladud, the story goes, had been banished by his father Hudibras, at the request of the nobility and gentry of the English court, on account of the leprosy from which he suffered, and on his parting the queen mother had presented him with a ring, as a token by which she might recognise him if he re-

turned to London cured. On the Downs, poor Bladud exchanged clothes with a shepherd, and soon after, by aid of this rough dress, obtained charge of a drove of pigs from a swineherd at Keynsham. Unfortunately, Bladud's pigs soon caught the leprosy of their master, and, to conceal the disorder, the young swineherd proposed to drive the pigs to the other side of the Avon, and feed them on the acorns of the woods that covered the sides of the Somersetshire hills.

He crossed the river at a place he afterwards called Swineford, and was praying to God as the sun broke forth upon him, when, as if at a given signal, the whole drove of swine rushed up the valley by the side of the river till they reached the bogs into which the hot-springs of Bath oozed. With difficulty decoying the pigs from their luxurious wallow by sprinkles of acorns, Bladud was delighted and astonished to find some of the herd recovered from their loathsome disease. The prince, pondering over this fact for a week, as he daily fed and washed his porkers, came at last, slowly but surely, to the not unnatural conclusion that a warm mud-bath might do no harm to himself, if the old proverb, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," was worth anything. So in he went among the mud and sedges, two headers a day; and in a few weeks became sound and whole as the fairest maid in Albion.

Bladud then drove home his cured bacon, and told the worthy swineherd who he was, and all the history of the miraculous cure. Then off Bladud and the swineherd went to the palace of King Hudibras, the young prince promising, if he could, to make a regular gentleman and landed proprietor of the worthy pork butcher of Keynsham. As the king and queen were dining in public, Bladud slyly slipped the ring into a glass of wine that was being presented to the queen, who, luckily, not swallowing it, observed it at the bottom of the glass, and instantly threw up her white arms and exclaimed:

"Where is Bladud! O where is Bladud, my child?" A scene ensued. Everyone embraced everybody, and Bladud was at once proclaimed heir-apparent.

The rejoicings over, King Hudibras resolved to send his son to study in Greece, as he seemed so remarkable a genius; and retainers and rich clothes were duly ordered. But Bladud, with his usual good sense, determined to go to Athens in plain

student's dress; and there he stayed for eleven years, learning philosophy, the rule of three, dry measure, duodecimals, vulgar fractions, and necromancy, and so rendered himself fit in due time to succeed King Hudibras, and to build a palace and cisterns at Bath, which he made the capital of the British kings, erecting a temple to Minerva on no less a place than Lansdown.

King Bladud's end, however, was not of a satisfactory sort, for he gave out, one luckless day, says Leland, that he would publicly rival Dædalus and make a journey through the air like a bird; and so he did, with only one point of difference—that, when he was up, he could not keep up; so down he came, as some say, on Salisbury church; as others say, on a temple of Apollo, and broke his imprudent neck, after an otherwise judicious reign of twenty years.

This wild conglomerated story was firmly believed in Bath as late as 1740, in spite of Rochester's satire and even Powell's puppet-show, that had mixed up Punch with Bladud and his pigs in a most irreverent and droll way.

Bath was built by the Emperor Claudius about the year A.D. 44, after the fierce Caracac had been driven into Wales and the Dobuni, who held Gloucestershire, had been subdued. Claudius, pleased with the warm and healing springs, left word for a city to be at once begun here, to inclose the magic waters. Parts of this inclosure was discovered, about 1795, on the site of the borough walls opposite the Hospital. Eleven feet deep the Roman basements were found, fifteen feet thick; the outer face was grit stone, the rubble filled up with that adamant lime peculiar to those energetic builders. The Roman baths themselves had been discovered, in 1755, twenty feet below the surface. The semicircular walls were eight feet in height, and of wrought stone, with a stone seat round them, and a descent of seven steps into the water. Another bath, an oblong, had on three sides a colonnade, and on one side of this second bath were two sudatories, the brick floors being supported by strong brick pillars; several other small apartments were discovered near the sudatories—a room for undressing, a tepid room, and a room for oil, ointments, and perfumes. Some of these chambers had tessellated pavement and a regular set of well-wrought channels conveyed the waste water from the baths into the Avon.

Agricola, Domitian's general, who repressed the revolt of Arviragus and the Silures of Wales, did much to increase the luxury of Bath. He built in the new Anglo-Roman city a temple, which he dedicated to Minerva, whom Domitian claimed as his mother. The Emperor Hadrian posted some of his sixth legion here in A.D. 120, and established in Bath a manufactory of arms, obtaining the requisite iron from the Forest of Dean and the hills of Monmouthshire. Many of the Roman remains found in Bath have reference to the curative powers of the Bath waters, the earliest being two votive altars erected by a freed-man in gratitude to the Bath water gods for the benefit derived by his patron, Marcus Aufidius, an officer of the sixth legion. Here also exists the pediment of a rude chapel, apparently dedicated to Luna and Æsculapius, both deities who presided over human health. Geta, the younger son of Severus, is said to have spent some time at Bath when Severus, his father, and Caracalla, his detestable brother, came to Britain to quell a Caledonian insurrection, and an equestrian figure of Geta has been discovered at Bath.

Bath became afterwards known to the Romans as "Aquæ Solis" (Waters of the Sun), and the springs were dedicated to Apollo Medicus. The head of the bronze statue of this god, set up in the city, probably in the reign of Caracalla or Heliogabalus, is still extant. There is also shown to visitors a rude square altar, roughly sculptured with figures in relief of Jove and Hercules Bibax (convivial Hercules). These were the patron deities of Diocletian and Maximinus, in whose reign Carausius, a Roman admiral, seized Britain and held it manfully for seven years. Bath also possesses a barbarous piece of sculpture, supposed to represent this usurper dressed in a tunic and a clasped chlamys. The hair is cropped, and the beard short and curled, while a rudely-carved dolphin near the head marks the Roman naval officer. Coins of Carausius have been also found in the neighbourhood of Bath.

Little more is known of Roman Bath, except that a part of the twentieth legion and some Spanish horse were quartered there, and that a votive tablet, erected by some German invalid, testifies to the continued belief in the healing waters.

The Romans had called Bath the Hot Wells, the Waters of the Sun; the Saxons, Caer-Badon, Hot Bathen, or Ake-meni-

caster (the Sick Men's Town). The mediæval monks named it Bathonia, Badonda, Badonesse, Balnea. In 493 Ella and the Saxons were said to have encamped on Lansdown and besieged Bath; but King Arthur overthrew them in a tremendous battle. Arthur is also said to have beaten at Bath Cerdic's three generals, and to have cleared off with his own hand four hundred and forty Saxon private soldiers, which, considering that there were no newspapers then, is pretty well. Osric, king of the Wickii, founded a nunnery at Bath in 677. In 775 Osric, king of Mercia, wresting Bath from Wessex, replaced the Bath nunnery by a college of secular canons. In the reign of Athelstan, Bath was flourishing, and there was a Saxon mint in the city. This munificent monarch gave the convent fifteen small estates on the condition that daily masses were offered up for him. King Edgar was crowned in Bath.

In this reign the monastery at Bath was turned upside down by St. Dunstan's cruel crusade against the married clergy. He represented them as monsters of wickedness, and finding them indifferent to the ambitious aims of the church and the exorbitant and daily increasing claims of the Pope, swept them out of Bath (and forty-seven other monasteries) and replaced them with Benedictine monks. Many sham miracles were now manufactured to elevate the Benedictine order, and amongst others the dead Abbot of Pershore was said to have risen from his bier, and to have told his mourners that St. Benedict had introduced him into Heaven, where he was one of the handsomest and best-dressed saints he saw, and that he was surrounded by a vast assembly of monks and nuns. The new abbot appointed at Bath was Elphegus, a native of Weston, who had lived as a hermit, practising fasts and denials of all kinds, and lashing himself daily. The abbey of Bath now laid in a profitable stock of relics, the necessary attractions to rich pilgrims. Among these were the heads of St. Bartholomew, St. Lawrence, and St. Pancras; the knee of St. Maurice the Martyr; hair and milk of the Virgin; some of John the Baptist's blood; part of our Lord's sepulchre and his shroud and vest; a fragment of the pillar to which he was bound; the ribs of St. Barnabas; and the arm of St. Simeon.

At the dissolution the income of Bath abbey amounted to six hundred and seven-

teen pounds two shillings and threepence halfpenny, and as many of the monasteries whose revenue did not exceed two hundred pounds a year were first suppressed, Bath, by aid of a bribe to Cromwell, was not touched for some time. The abbot, however, voluntarily surrendered the abbey in 1539; and he and other brothers were all pensioned, the monastery having existed, doing more or less good, for eight hundred and sixty-three years.

The abbey-house was not finally demolished till 1755; and in one of the old rooms a sacristy was discovered, hung with copes, albs, and chasubles, which, however, crumbled into dust when the external air was admitted to them. In this room was also found the handle of a crozier and two large chests, empty, as the workmen asserted, though one of the men soon after grew suddenly rich and retired from business. In a window in the prior's lodgings were blazoned the arms of Priors Bird, Cantlow, and Hungerford.

It was Olive King, principal secretary of Henry the Seventh, who rebuilt Bath abbey in its present state. Sir John Harrington, in his *Nugæ Antiquæ*, tells a curious story of the vision that induced this bishop to undertake the good work. One night, at Bath, after his devotion and prayers for King Henry the Seventh and his children, he was lying, meditating, when he saw, or supposed he saw, a vision of the Holy Trinity, with angels ascending and descending by a ladder, near which stood an olive-tree, supporting a crown, and a voice called to him, "Let an olive establish the crown, and let a king restore the church." In this dream the bishop took great comfort, telling divers of his friends, and applying it, partly to the wise king his master, "the wisest and most peaceable king in all Europe of that age," and partly to himself. He had been Henry's ambassador to Charles the Eighth of France, and had obtained from him a concession to England of seven hundred and forty-five ducats, besides a yearly tribute of twenty-five thousand crowns. The bishop, transported with this dream, for his name was both Olive and King, presently set to work on this church; and in the west end he graved a vision of the Trinity, with angels on Jacob's ladder, and, on the north side, an olive and crown, with certain French words and this verse in English:

Trees going to choose their king,
Said, "Be to us the olive king."

and near it the words, "De sursum est."

("It is from on high.") The olive and crown are still on both the north and south side of the church, with an elephant on each side of the crowned olive.

When that negligent Italian bishop, De Castello, lived at Rome and farmed out the see of Bath and Wells, Cardinal Wolsey rented it of the absentee.

Bishop Godwyn, who in Mary's reign had turned physician, was one of Queen Elizabeth's Lent preachers. He pleased the queen with his learned and "smart conversation." In his old age, however, he incurred the Virgin Queen's displeasure by marrying a young and wealthy lord's widow.

Godwyn's successor, the learned Dr. John Still, master of Trinity College, Cambridge, was the author of that droll old comedy, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and the writer of that hearty old drinking song, *Jolly Good Ale and Old*. This bishop made large sums from the episcopal lead mines, near Mendip.

The next bishop, Dr. James Montague, who had been dean of the chapel to James the First, spent large sums in decorating Bath abbey. Sir John Harrington is said to have enticed the bishop to this good work by leading him, on a wet day, into the unroofed north aisle of the abbey.

"Sir John," said the bishop, looking up, "we are still in the wet."

"How can that be, my lord, seeing that we are within the church?" replied Harrington.

"True," said the bishop; "but your church is unroofed, Sir John."

"The more's the pity," replied the knight, "and the more does it call for the munificence of your lordship."

The narrow-minded Laud was Bishop of Bath and Wells when he angered the susceptible people by using an old formula, disused since the reign of Richard the Second, when he crowned Charles the First. The excellent Bishop Kenn (author of the *Evening Hymn*) threw up this see rather than transfer his allegiance to William of Orange, and went and died at Longleet, the seat of his friend and patron, Lord Viscount Weymouth. It is said that he secretly wore his shroud from his secession till the day of his death. Bishop Kidder met with a singular end in the year of Queen Anne's accession. During the tremendous storm of November 27, 1703, as he and his wife were at prayers in the palace at Wells, one of the chimneys bat-

tered down the roof of the apartment, and crushed them both.

Bath cathedral is interesting as being the last cathedral built in England. The west end is very sumptuous. The doorway of the grand entrance was given in 1617 by Sir Henry Montague, brother of the bishop. It is charged with the arms of the see, impaling those of Montague, and round the shield runs the device of the Garter. Under the two other shields, which are those of Montague alone, is a label, with the inscription, "*Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum*," &c.: "Behold, how joyful and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Above the shields is a profile helmet, with a griffin's head for a crest, and behind a flowing mantle. The arch is square-headed, and the spandrels are filled with labels inclosing wounded hearts, crowns of thorns, and pierced hands and feet. On each side of the doorway, in niches, stands statues of St. Peter and St. Paul. Under the first is a blended white-and-red-rose crown; under St. Paul, a crown and a portcullis. In the battlemented cornices above is a vacant niche, once, probably, filled by St. Peter or Henry the Seventh. Up the two side turrets of the great west window run two ladders which the angels of Bishop Olive King are ascending. Below, on either side of the ladders, stand figures of shepherds, with illegible labels close above their heads. On each side of the upper part of the ladders are six canopied figures of the Apostles, among which St. John and St. Andrew only have been preserved in their integrity. Above the great sheet of glass are rows of kneeling angels, who represent the heavenly choir above. On the central and topmost niche is a mutilated statue; and below, the arms of the see and the supporters to the arms of Henry the Seventh, holding the white-and-red roses and a royal crown. There are also still visible two shields, surmounted by a cardinal's cap, probably those of Adrian de Castello, who vaulted the choir.

The aisle buttresses are ornamented with scrolls now illegible, and small arched heads with crowns, from the rays of which spring olive trees; over these are bishops' mitres. On the mullions of the windows are statues of Offa and Edgar. The one restored Offa's monastery, while the other gave a charter to Bath. The figures stand on emblazoned pedestals. Over the head of a statue of

Our Saviour is a griffin. Above one window is the inscription "*Domus mea*," and over another, "*Domus orationis*."

The interior of the abbey is singular and very beautiful, with its fifty-two windows, and its great range of light and fragile stone work. The nave is later work than the choir, and was probably rebuilt by Bishop Montague. The roof is very flat. The little chapel of Prior Bird (1525), a mass of crocheted tracery, has been ruthlessly cut down to make room for the cumbersome bishops' throne. The gorgeous tomb of the generous Bishop Montague, with its pontifical effigy, adorns the north centre of the nave. Corinthian pillars at the head and feet support an entablature, and it is crowned above with the bishop's escutcheon. From the nucleus, where the transept, nave, and choir unite, springs the massy tower, one hundred and sixty-two feet in height, and crowned with perforated battlements that look like petrified lace-work.

In this noble abbey repose knights and beaux, George the Third doctors and barons of the Tudor times. Under the well-trodden floor repose the masqueraders of all centuries, waiting for the last trumpet—abbots and fine ladies, friends of Dr. Johnson and Garrick, and stern monks, who opposed kings and beat down the sword with the crozier. Dainty misses, who swam about the baths with floating trays for nosegay and snuff-box, and demure nuns of the early English period; gentlemen who were not admitted to the new assembly-rooms in boots; and young misses who were not allowed to dance minuets without lappets or in aprons, lie beside early English barons and lady prioresses—"Dust to dust" and "All is vanity" written largely on many a tomb.

Some of the epitaphs are very noteworthy. There is a quaint one of the reign of James the First on one of the Erneles of Wiltshire, who intermarried with the Hungerfords of Farley Castle and Hungerford Market:—

An Ernele Hungerford here lyeth in grave;
More than thy owne, O earth, thou maist not have:
His earthly part, his body, that is thine,
His heavenly, his soule, that part divine,
Is Heaven's right; there doth it live and raigne,
In joy and blisse for ever to remaine.
His body in her bosome earth must keep
Till such as rest in hope shall rise from sleepe;
Then body joynd with soule for ever shall
In glory live, raigne both celestiall.

At the north side of the transept is the bust of a lady, seen between curtains. It

is one of the Framptons of Dorsetshire, with an epitaph by Dryden, from which we extract a few characteristic verses :

Beneath this marble monument is laid
All that Heaven wants of this celestial mayd :
Preserve, O sacred tomb ! thy trust consign'd !
The mould was made on purpose for the mind ;
And she would lose, if at the latter day
One atom could be mixed of other clay.
Such were the features of her heavenly face,
Her limbs were form'd with such harmonious grace ;
So faultless was the frame, as if the whole
Had been an emanation of the soul,
Which her own inward symmetry reveal'd,
And like a picture shone, in glass anneal'd ;
Or like the sun eclipsed with shaded light,
Too piercing else to be sustain'd by sight.
Each thought was visible that roll'd within,
As through a crystal case the figur'd hours are seen :
And Heaven did this transparent veil provide,
Because she had no guilty thought to hide.
All white, a virgin-saint, she sought the skies ;
For marriage, though it sullies not, it dyes !
High though her wit, yet humble was her mind,
As if she could not, or she would not find,
How much her worth transcended all her kind.
Yet she had learn'd so much of Heaven below,
That when arriv'd she scarce had more to know ;
But only to refresh the former hint,
And read her Maker in a fairer print.

On a pillar at the south-eastern end of the nave there is a very neat monument, having, on a pyramid of Sienna marble, a medallion with the half-length figure of the facetious James Quin, and on a tablet underneath the following inscription :

That tongue which set the table in a roar,
And charm'd the public ear, is heard no more ;
Clos'd are those eyes, the harbingers of wit,
Which spake before the tongue, what Shakespeare
writ ;
Cold is that hand, which, living, was stretch'd forth,
At friendship's call, to succour modest worth.
Here lies James Quin :—Deign, reader, to be taught,
What'er thy strength of body, force of thought,
In Nature's happiest mould however cast,
To this complexion thou must come at last.

Ob. MDCCCLXVI. Etatis LXXIII.

D. GARRICK.

At the south end of the south transept is a monument to the wife of Waller, the poet, with the following inscription :

To the dear memory of the right virtuous and worthy lady, Jane Lady Waller, sole daughter and heir to Sir Richard Bagnell, wife to Sir William Waller, Knight :—

Sole issue of a matchless paire,
Both of their state and virtues heyre ;
In graces great, in stature small,
As full of spirit as voyd of gall ;
Cheerfully brave, bounteously close,
Holy without vain-glorious shows ;
Happy, and yet from envy free,
Learned without pride—witty, yet wise.
Reader, this riddle read with me,
Here the good Lady Waller lyes.

There is a tradition that King James the Second, passing through the church and casting his eye on Waller's obnoxious effigy, drew his sword, and hacked off the

poor knight's nose, in which mutilated state his face still continues, in testimony of that act of heroism.

An instance of James's bigotry, as well as this anecdote of his impotent malice, is preserved to us by tradition. Shortly after his accession to the crown, he visited this city, and, amongst his attendants, brought down the famous Father Huddlestone, his confessor and friend. The friar, by James's order, went to the abbey church and exhibited on the altar all the mummery of the Romish ritual, closing the farce with a heavy denunciation of wrath against the heretics, and an exhortation to an immediate change from the errors of Protestantism to the true faith, from which this country had apostatised. In the number of his auditors was Kenn, Bishop of Bath and Wells, who had ever been a firm friend of the Reformed Church and a defender of its rights. Fired with indignation at this ill-judged display of blind zeal, the prelate, as soon as Huddlestone concluded his discourse, mounted a stone pulpit, which then stood in the body of the church, and, desiring the congregation (who were retiring) to remain, he pronounced, extempore, a discourse in answer to Huddlestone; exposing his fallacies, and displaying the errors of his church and the absurdity of its doctrines, in a strain of such impressive eloquence as astonished and delighted his congregation and completely confounded Huddlestone and the royal bigot.

Nor, last of all, must we forget the tomb of that worthy fribble but useful king "of the fashionable watering-place, Beau Nash, who died in this city in 1761, old and imbecile, aged eighty-seven. Nash was born to rule, and did all a master of ceremonies could do : he kept the men in order and the women in good humour, and he forbade the wearing of swords, boots, and spurs in the ball-room. He erected the obelisk in the Grove in token of the recovery, in Bath, of the Prince of Orange and the honour conferred on the city by the Prince of Wales's visits ; and Dr. Barrington inscribed the following not undeserved lines on his tablet in Bath abbey church :

If social virtues make remembrance dear,
Or manners pure on decent rule depend ;
To his remains consign one grateful tear
Of youth the guardian, and of all the friend.
Now sleeps dominion ; here no bounty flows ;
No more avails the festive scene to grace ;
Beneath that hand which no discernment shows,
Untaught to honour or distinguish place.

I'LL DIE AT HOME.

Oh aye, it is very likely, it's mostlins what I have heard;
She comes of an honest stock, you see, the egg bodes best of the bird;
And we were girls together, we've laked through many a day,
Though now she's mistress up yonder, and I'se upon parish pay.

And I'se no call to shame for it; I'se but taking back my own,
I'se never owed cess, or rent, or rate, it's known through all the town;
It's not much I want—a sup of tea, a bite of bread to eat,
But, sooner than go to't House for them, honey, I'd die i't' street.

What, she "keeps all straight and tidy," Mrs. Jones we mun call her now.
It was Sal, and Polly, long ago, in the cots upon the brow;
O she's a canny body, was always hearty and wick,
Never let a job stand still for her, nor dirt have time to stick.

And I'se a cobweb i't' corner. I seed thee tak' heed of it,
And thou'd fain ha' dusted the settle, when I bade thee come and sit;
I seed thee Bairn, and I'd ha' liked to up and tell thee then,
Thou'd, mebbey, be no better off at thy threescore and ten.

It's "Home, be it ne'er so homely," as my old man used to sing,
When, after supper at father's farm, he sate by me in the ring;
And here he brought me when we were wed, and here the childer were born,
And here he bade God bless me, and went, one dreary Christmas morn.

I sate all night by yon pillow, where he lay dead and cold,
The little 'uns climbed about me, as the passing-bell was tolled;
Well, it's all past and half forgot, and my time has soon to come,
But they needn't crack of the House to me, I tell thee I'll die at Home.

That's his stick set by the clock, dost see, and his cap upon the pin,
And yon's the corner our bonnie bairns were fond of hidelin' in;
Why, when the ashes are dying, I sit, and listen, and look,
Till I see it all afore me, as plain as a printed book.

And I can steek my door, and clean, or pray, or cry my fill,
Or set it wide, and rake the logs, and call a neighbour at will,
And go where I like, and have who I like, and watch them go and come;
Bed and board may be good up there, but, for me, I'll die at Home.

I'se had little but labour all my life, bread has been hard to get,
But I'se done as my old man bid me—kept clear of begging or debt;
I want but a hole of my own, in this world of the rich and blest;
Well, it all raffles my worsted, but for sure the Lord knows best.

It's His will. I've striven to do it, to be honest, and pure, and brave,
His Word says naught of the Workhouse, and naught of a Parish grave;

I'se put by what'll bury me, i't' stocking up on t' shelf,
And what I can't get I'll do without, and make my moan to myself.

Mrs. Jones may come and see me. I'll give her a cup of tea,
We'll talk of times when we little thought of differ 'twixt her and me;
She's nobbut keeper of a gaol, as may be to the liking of some,
But, faring hard, or sleeping cold, I'll die, as I've lived, at Home.

REMARKABLE ADVENTURERS.

COUNT SAINT-GERMAIN.

FROM the days of Ishmael to those of joint-stock companies, a certain percentage of the human race has filled the rôle of the adventurer—of him whose hand is against every man, and whose life depends upon that precarious patrimony known as his wits. As civilisation has ebbed and flowed, and society put on various shapes and colours, the adventurer, chameleon-like, has known how to adjust his hue to that of surrounding objects. Athens and Rome have left imperishable records of the sycophants and parasites, led-captains and legacy hunters, who infested the tables of the great—creatures whose existence depended on the luxury and vanity inspired by wealth and culture, destined to extinction in those dour times when a supple knee, an agile wit, and a lying tongue availed little against hard knocks. In the dark ages the adventurer changed his skin, showed his claws openly, and threw off the perfumed garments and the rosy crown, to don the baresark of the Viking, the mail of the robber baron, or the buckskin jerkin of the merry outlaw—merry enough in himself, doubtless, but hardly the cause of merriment in others. At a later date he put on many disguises, and appeared by turns as a crusader; as a condottiere; as a Barbary rover; as a gentleman of Devon, who went forth in his tall ship to trade a little, and to plunder Jack Spaniard as much as possible; as a reiter or as a lanzknecht; as a goldseeker in the fabled El Dorado; as a buccaneer in the Spanish Main; as a trailer of a pike in the Low Countries; as a gambler, necromancer, and financier by turns; and at last as a quiet man, attentive to all social observances, and strictly, nay, severely, moral in his outward seeming, but through whose outward covering of fashionable yet sober cut may be descried the more picturesque garments of his predecessors in the world of adventure.

Under the sleek broadcloth of that

cleanly-shaven promoter of public companies lurks the Lincoln green jerkin of Robin Hood; his stiff white waistcoat recalls the corslet of Bertram Rivingham; the neat boot conceals the upturned slipper of the Sallee renegade; the spotless wristbands hide Casanova's lace ruffles; the trim umbrella-cover incloses Captain Kyd's cutlass; the well-brushed hat has inside it the morion of Hawkwood; and the neatly-tied cravat overlaps the simpler necktie of stout Johnnie Armstrong!

The last century, among its other merits, had that of producing a race of swindlers as unlike to their forbears as to their living descendants. These illustrious sharpers were fostered by the peculiar condition of European society; and more particularly by the singular appetite for the marvellous which prevailed, not merely among the million, but in circles renowned for wit, learning, and scepticism. For the fifty or sixty years preceding the destruction of the Bastille the life of European courts was very much after the traditions of the regent Philip of Orleans, who himself had merely brought about a revival of the early days of Louis the Fourteenth. Court life in London presented an odd spectacle. Despite the effulgence of a few great figures, the age was mediocre, even in comparatively happy England; but abroad the curse of mediocrity, incredulity, and extravagance sat heavily on the reigning caste. Venice was in her dotage, and from the politest city in Europe had sunk to be the most dissolute—Rome, perhaps, excepted. Germany was sprinkled over with petty courts, each of which strove to imitate the sublime exemplar of Versailles, if not in splendour, at least in dissipation. Paris—luxurious Paris—piped and danced, recking little of poor Jacques Bonhomme starving in the country, and murmuring, for the time, only a low breath of wailing, shortly to swell into the voice of the hurricane. Brazen beauties and goddess abbés led a merry careless life of intrigues and madrigals, cards and junketings. It was a curious world, this Paris of Louis the Well-beloved. Old faiths had broken up and new ones had not yet begun to crystallise. Leaguer and Huguenot had been levelled down by Richelieu, and the relics of Catholicism had been melted in the crucible of the encyclopædists. From the king down to his valet de chambre nobody believed steadfastly in anything; but the want of faith in old doctrines was

supplied by an extraordinary credulity so far as the occult sciences were concerned. There was a singular craving for the mystical—the unknown. Fashionable sceptics opened their ears to the mysticism of Swedenborg, Lavater, and St. Martin. It would be absurd to confound these honest enthusiasts with the adventurers who perceived the weak side of their extant human nature. I merely cite their names to indicate the bias of instructed men and women towards new schemes and theories of life. Old-world fancies distilled from the alembics of astrologers met with ready favour. Abracadabra, cabala, the transmutation of metals, and the elixir of life again came to the front, along with Rosicrucian dreams and Egyptian freemasonry.

This peculiar condition of thought was eminently favourable to the advent of the charlatan, who saw his advantage and failed not to profit by it. Of various type and dubious nationality the charlatan sprang into life all over Europe; but as vultures spy from afar their loathsome food, and with heavy wing descend upon it, so towards the carcase of the old French monarchy sped a flock of adventurers—jugglers, conjurors, astrologers, charlatans—of every tribe and nation. In Paris, most incredulous and most curious of cities, the birds of prey clustered thickest. Over statesmen and philosophers, ballet dancers and poets, painters and pandars—odd harlequin crowd—rises clearly and distinctly the representative man of the epoch—the charlatan. At the councils of the king and at the board of cabinet ministers crop up strange figures, labelled with stranger titles—the illustrious Count Cagliostro, the dashing Chevalier de Seingalt, and the mysterious Count Saint-Germain.

This famous adventurer is supposed to have been an Hungarian by birth, but the early part of his life was by himself carefully wrapped in mystery. His person and his title alike stimulated curiosity. His age was unknown, and his parentage equally obscure. We catch the first glimpse of him in Paris, a century and a quarter ago, filling the court and the town with his renown. Amazed Paris saw a man—apparently of middle age—a man who lived in magnificent style, who went to dinner parties, where he ate nothing, but talked incessantly, and with exceeding brilliancy, on every imaginable topic. His tone was, perhaps, over trenchant—the

tone of a man who knows perfectly what he is talking about. Learned, speaking every civilised language admirably, a great musician, an excellent chemist, he played the part of a prodigy, and played it to perfection. Endowed with extraordinary confidence, or consummate impudence, he not only laid down the law magisterially concerning the present, but spoke without hesitation of events two hundred years old. His anecdotes of remote occurrences were related with extraordinary minuteness. He spoke of scenes at the court of Francis the First as if he had seen them, describing exactly the appearance of the king, imitating his voice, manner, and language—affecting throughout the character of an eye-witness. In like style he edified his audience with pleasant stories of Louis the Fourteenth, and regaled them with vivid descriptions of places and persons. Hardly saying in so many words that he was actually present when the events happened, he yet contrived, by his great graphic power, to convey that impression. Intending to astonish, he succeeded completely. Wild stories were current concerning him. He was reported to be three hundred years old, and to have prolonged his life by the use of a famous elixir. Paris went mad about him. He was questioned constantly about his secret of longevity, and was marvellously adroit in his replies, denying all power to make old folks young again, but quietly asserting his possession of the secret of arresting decay in the human frame. Diet, he protested, was, with his marvellous elixir, the true secret of long life, and he resolutely refused to eat any food but such as had been specially prepared for him—oatmeal, groats, and the white meat of chickens. On great occasions he drank a little wine, sat up as late as anybody would listen to him, but took extraordinary precautions against the cold. To ladies he gave mysterious cosmetics, to preserve their beauty unimpaired; to men he talked openly of his method of transmuting metals, and of a certain process for melting down a dozen little diamonds into one large stone. These astounding assertions were backed by the possession of apparently unbounded wealth, and a collection of jewels of rare size and beauty.

In endeavouring to tell what is known of this extraordinary man, I think it well to reject all evidence of the second-hand or hearsay order, and to confine myself strictly to the evidence of eye-witnesses.

Of these, one of the most important is Madame du Hausset, a lady who enjoyed the distinguished honour of being *femme de chambre* to Madame de Pompadour, and was industrious enough to write a book of Memoirs, confused in composition and atrocious in spelling, but nevertheless full of interest for those who "want to know." It must not be supposed that, because she wrote and spelt ill, Madame du Hausset was a vulgar person, or of base origin; on the contrary, she was a person of condition, spoke, wrote, and spelt like one. In estimating the degree of cultivation achieved by ladies during the two last centuries, it must never be forgotten that the arts of speaking decently and civilly, and of spelling correctly, are of modern invention, and are by no means too widely distributed even at the present moment. The lady *femme de chambre* appears to have been the confidante of her mistress, who, from her *boudoir*, misruled France and bedevilled the politics of Europe. Madame de Pompadour, highly accomplished as she was, nevertheless protected a private fortune-teller—one Madame Bontemps—who told fortunes by coffee-grounds, and had had the good luck to foretell the disgrace of the Abbé de Bernis. "There came often to see my mistress," says Madame du Hausset, "a man who was at least as astonishing as any sorceress. This was the Count Saint-Germain, who wished it to be believed that he had lived for several centuries. One day, as Madame (de Pompadour) was at her toilet, she said to him before me, 'What sort of a man was Francis the First? That's a king I should have loved.' 'A most amiable man,' said Saint-Germain, and described his face and general appearance. 'It is a pity he was so given to gallantry. I could have given him a piece of advice that would have saved him from all his misfortunes; but he would not have followed it, for it seems there is for princes a fatality which closes their ears, that is to say, those of their mind, to the best advice—above all at critical moments.' 'And the constable,' said Madame, 'what do you say of him?' 'I cannot say much good or much harm,' replied he. 'Was the court of Francis the First very splendid?' 'Very; but that of his grandson's infinitely surpassed it, and in the time of Mary Stuart and Marguerite of Valois it was an enchanted region, the temple of pleasure and wit. The two queens were

learned, and made verses it was a pleasure to listen to.' Madame replied, laughing, 'It seems that you have seen all this.' 'I have a good memory,' said he, 'and I have read French history a great deal. Sometimes I amuse myself, not in making believe but in letting believe, that I have lived in very ancient times.' 'But, after all, you won't tell your age, and you give yourself out as very old. The Countess Gergy, who was, I believe, fifty years ago ambassadress at Venice, says that she knew you such as you are to-day.' 'It is true, madame, that I knew Madame de Gergy long ago.' 'But, according to what she says, you must now be more than a hundred years old.' 'That is not impossible,' said he, laughing, 'but I admit that it is more possible that this lady, for whom I have infinite respect, talks nonsense.' 'You gave her,' said Madame, 'an elixir surprising in its effects; she pretends that for a long while she appeared to be no older than twenty-four. Why should not you give some to the king?' 'Ah! madame,' said he, with a species of terror, 'I should be mad indeed to take it into my head to give the king an unknown drug.'"

At this interesting point aggravating Madame du Hausset retired to her room, "to write down this conversation." "A few days after," she continues, "there was much talk between the king, madame, sundry seigneurs, and the Count of Saint-Germain, concerning the secret he possessed to remove stains from diamonds. The king had a middling-sized diamond brought to him, marked very distinctly. It was weighed, and the king said, 'It is worth six thousand livres, but it would be worth ten without the stain. Will you undertake to make me the richer by four thousand?' The count, a month later, brought back the diamond stainless, wrapped in an asbestos cloth. The king had it weighed, and it nearly drew the full weight. The king sent it secretly to his jeweller, by M. de Gontaut, who brought back nine thousand six hundred livres, but the king got the diamond back and kept it out of curiosity. The king was non-plussed, and said that Saint-Germain ought to be worth millions above all, if he had the secret of making big diamonds out of little ones. To this he replied neither yes nor no, but said positively that he could increase the size of pearls, and gave them one of the finest colour."

These latter details were told Madame du Hausset by her mistress. She now resumes the rôle of eye-witness. "I have seen him many times; he appeared about fifty years old, was neither stout nor thin, had a keen bright look, was dressed simply, but with great taste; he wore very handsome diamonds on his fingers, as well as on his snuff-box and watch. He came one day, when the court was in full splendour, to see Madame, with shoe-buckles and garters of such superb diamonds, that Madame thought the king had none so handsome. He went into the ante-chamber to take them off, in order to show them better and compare them with others. Madame Gontaut, who was there, said they were worth at least two hundred thousand francs. On the same day he wore a snuff-box of immense value, and ruby sleeve-buttons of great splendour. Nobody knew how this man became so rich and so remarkable, and the king would not allow him to be sneered at or treated with contempt. He is said to be a natural son of the King of Portugal."

It would appear that the famous count was on very familiar terms not only with the Pompadour but with the king. One day he said, "To esteem mankind one must be neither confessor, minister, nor chief of police." "Nor king," added his most christian majesty. "Ah," said the count, "your majesty observed the fog there was a few days since; you could not see a yard before you. Kings in general are environed by much thicker fogs, evolved by schemers and faithless ministers." "This," says Madame du Hausset, "I heard myself on the same day that the king compared his Prussian majesty to Julian the Apostate." On another occasion Saint-Germain dropped in with a box full of topazes, emeralds, and rubies. Madame du Hausset could not believe them to be real, and made a sign to her mistress to that effect. Saint-Germain crushed the sceptic at once by giving her a jewelled cross "worth fifteen hundred francs."

Thus far Madame du Hausset, who clearly could not make up her mind concerning the great adventurer, who asked nothing and gave freely. Our next view of him is not in the veiled light of the boudoir, but in the broad glare of the world. Charles Henry Baron Gleichen, coming to Paris in the year 1759, paid a visit to the widow of the Chevalier Lambert. Shortly after his arrival came in

a man of middle height, squarely built, dressed with rich and choice simplicity. He threw his hat and sword on the bed of the mistress of the house, and himself into an arm-chair near the fire, interrupting the conversation by saying to the man who was speaking, "You don't know what you are talking about; I am the only person able to speak on this subject. I have exhausted it as I have music—having nothing more to learn."

This impertinent personage was no other than Saint-Germain, then in the full confidence of Madame de Pompadour and of the king, who had given him a residence at Chambord to carry out some experiments in dyeing. Meeting him next day at dinner, Baron Gleichen turned the conversation upon Italy, and had the happiness to please the eminent magician, who said, "I have taken a great fancy to you, and will show you a dozen pictures, the like of which you have not seen in Italy." "Actually," says Gleichen, "he almost kept his word, for the pictures he showed me were all stamped either with singularity or perfection, which rendered them more interesting than many first-class works. Above all was a Holy Family by Murillo, equal in beauty to that by Rafaelle at Versailles. But he showed me other wonders—a large quantity of jewels and coloured diamonds of extraordinary size and perfection. I thought I beheld the treasures of the Wonderful Lamp. Among other gems were an opal of monstrous size, and a white sapphire (?) as large as an egg, which, by its brilliancy, dimmed all the stones compared with it. I flatter myself that I am a connoisseur in gems, but I can declare that it was impossible to perceive any reason for doubting the genuineness of these jewels, the more so that they were not mounted." Baron Gleichen was convinced, and quitted him a fervent believer; and explains the stories about his age very simply, by saying that Saint-Germain adapted his style of narrative to his audience. Talking of remote events to a blockhead, he told him downright that he was present; but when before a critical audience, conducted himself as he did before Madame de Pompadour. According to Gleichen, the excitement about the popular stories of Saint-Germain was not lessened by the eccentricities of an odd personage called Lord Gower, because he imitated Englishmen very well. Having been employed as a spy in the English army during the Seven Years' War,

he was familiar with the art of disguise, and proceeded among the good bourgeois of the Marais to give himself out as the Count Saint-Germain. This joker did not stick at trifles. He was not hundreds, but thousands of years old; had been a friend of Pontius Pilate and family; had assisted at the Council of Nice; and, moreover, possessed a truly rejuvenating elixir, of which it was said that a lady kept carefully stored away a precious phial, but that her old servant, discovering the secret, took such tremendous doses that she became again a little child! The age of the true Saint-Germain puzzled all his contemporaries. Rameau and Madame de Gergy declare that he looked fifty in 1710; in 1759 he looked barely ten years older either to Gleichen, Madame du Hausset, or other eye-witnesses; and up to the time of his death, in 1783, preserved the appearance of a vigorous sexagenarian.

On the 14th of March, 1760, Kauderbach, then Saxon minister at the Hague, wrote a curious despatch to the home government touching the Count Saint-Germain, who had made his appearance at the Dutch diplomatic capital. Louis the Fifteenth was served, like many more of the same type, by two sets of servants. The Duke de Choiseul was the king's minister of foreign affairs and the very humble servant of the Marchioness Pompadour. Under his rule, the brothers Pâris-Duvernay—great financiers—became absolute sovereigns of the Bank of France, and the national cash-box became nearly empty. In his necessity, the king had recourse to the Maréchal de Bellegarde, whose "âme damnée" was none other than Saint-Germain, who had given him the plan and the model of the famous flat boats which were to assure the conquest of England. The Marshal, who was keen enough to see that Choiseul alone stood between France and a direct treaty with Prussia, based on the ruins of the ancient alliance with Austria, urged the king and Madame de Pompadour to secure the head and arm of the Great Frederick. Saint-Germain ultimately succeeded in persuading them to send him to the Hague, to the Duke Louis of Brunswick, of whom he declared himself the most particular friend. Armed with credentials, the mysterious count set out for the Hague, to conduct a negotiation without the knowledge of the ambassador, M. d'Affry. At first he was very successful, and Kauderbach was, with others, completely

captivated by the elegance, amiability, and riches of the mysterious envoy, but he nevertheless became a nine days' wonder, and no more, for the great adventurer had overshot his mark, and was compelled to bid adieu for ever to Paris, Chambord, Pompadour, &c. Choiseul, instructed by the acute ambassador d'Affry, easily unravelled the schemes of the occult envoy extraordinary, and complained to the king, who immediately disavowed all share in the business, and left Saint-Germain to his fate. Choiseul despatched a courier to d'Affry, who at once demanded of the Grand Pensionary the arrest and extradition of Saint-Germain, who ran a narrow chance of sharing the fate of the Man with the Iron Mask. The Pensionary referred the request to the council of deputies of the province of Holland, of whom Bentinck was president. This gentleman advised Saint-Germain of his danger, and made him sail for England.

From time to time this strange being appeared in various European capitals, under various names—as Marquis of Montferrat; Count Bellamare, at Venice; Chevalier Schoening, at Pisa; Chevalier Weldon, at Milan; Count Soltikoff, at Genoa; Count Tzarogy, at Schwalbach; and, finally, as Count Saint-Germain, at Paris; but, after his disaster at the Hague, no longer seems so wealthy as before, and has at times the appearance of seeking his fortune.

At Tournay he is "interviewed" by the renowned Chevalier de Seingalt, who finds him in an Armenian robe and pointed cap, with a long beard descending to his waist, and ivory wand in hand—the complete make-up of a necromancer. Saint-Germain is surrounded by a legion of bottles, and is occupied in developing the manufacture of hats upon chemical principles. Seingalt being indisposed, the count offers to physic him gratis, and offers to dose him with an elixir which appears to have been ether; but the other refuses, with many polite speeches. It is the scene of the two augurs. Not being allowed to act as a physician, Saint-Germain determines to show his power as an alchemist; takes a twelve-sous piece from the other augur, puts it on red-hot charcoal, and works with the blowpipe. The piece of money is fused and allowed to cool. "Now," says Saint-Germain, "take your money again."—"But it is gold."—"Of the

purest." Augur number two does not believe in the transmutation, and looks on the whole operation as a trick, but he pockets the piece nevertheless, and finally presents it to the celebrated Marshal Keith, then governor of Neuchâtel.

Again in pursuit of dyeing and other manufacturing schemes, Saint-Germain turned up at St. Petersburg, Dresden, and Milan. Once he got into trouble, and was arrested in a petty town of Piedmont on a protested bill of exchange; but he pulled out a hundred thousand crowns' worth of jewels, paid on the spot, bullied the governor of the town like a pickpocket, and was released with the most respectful excuses.

Very little doubt exists that during one of his residences in Russia, he played an important part in the revolution which placed Catherine the Second on the throne. In support of this view, Baron Gleichen cites the extraordinary attention bestowed on Saint-Germain at Leghorn, in 1770, by Count Alexis Orloff, and a remark made by Prince Gregory Orloff to the Margrave of Anspach during his stay at Nuremberg.

After all, who was he?—the son of a Portuguese king, or of a Portuguese Jew? or did he, in his old age, tell the truth to his protector and enthusiastic admirer, Prince Charles of Hesse-Cassel? According to the story told his last friend, he was the son of a Prince Rakoczy, of Transylvania, and his first wife a Tékély. He was placed, when an infant, under the protection of the last of the Medici. When he grew up, and heard that his two brothers, sons of the Princess Hesse Rheinfels, or Rothenburg, had received the names of Saint Charles and Saint Elizabeth, he determined to take the name of their holy brother, Sanctus Germanus. What was the truth? One thing alone is certain—that he was a protégé of the last Medici. Prince Charles, who appears to have regretted his death, which happened in 1783, very sincerely, tells us that he fell sick, while pursuing his experiments in colours, at Eckernförde, and died shortly after, despite the innumerable medicaments prepared by his own private apothecary. Frederick the Great, who, despite his scepticism, took a queer interest in astrologers, said of him, "This is a man who does not die." Mirabeau adds, epigrammatically, "He was always a careless fellow, and at last, unlike his predecessors, forgot not to die."

What was this man? an eccentric prince, or a successful scoundrel? a devotee of science, a mere schemer, or a strange mixture of all?—a problem, even to himself.

THE HOSTESS OF THE RAVEN.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

I WAS belated. I was in a remote side valley that opened from one of the great passes from Switzerland into Italy, and that terminated at its upper end at the foot of a mighty glacier. The road was practicable for wheels as far as a village which I shall call Falkenau.

I was young, active, and healthy, and I was tramping through some of the by-ways of Switzerland, on a solitary walking tour. As the autumn day fell, I suddenly awoke to the fact that it was dusk, nearly dark, that I was utterly alone on a solitary road, that there were no signs of Falkenau, which I ought to have reached half-an-hour ago, and that a strong Föhn was blowing down the valley.

Do you know what a Föhn is? It is a hot south-east wind from Italy, that oppresses and depresses man and beast. When it is very violent, and in certain localities, it is almost as dangerous as a West Indian hurricane; but it does not often get to be so bad as that. Well, the Föhn was blowing in my face, and chasing dark leaden-looking clouds across the sky. The dust rose before it in eddies, and a strange shudder ran through the pine trees in the little wood to my left. I had a sensation of something uncanny in the air, as we say in my north country, and I was more relieved than the occasion seemed to warrant, to see, on turning the corner of the crag that had seemed to bar my progress, a light twinkling in a window, and to know that I was close to Falkenau.

The light shone from a lower window of a large house which I presently reached. The house stood in a queer, cornerwise position with regard to the road, to which it seemed to turn a sulky shoulder. The highway had doubtless been made long after that house was built. It was of timber that had turned ashen-grey in the weather; and it had three stories, and large gables, and a huge, sloping, overhanging roof. There were many windows in the house, but they were all, save one, closely shut, and guarded by wooden shutters of the sort that we call in England Venetian blinds. Those shutters

may once have been painted, but all trace of colour had long departed from them, and they were now of the same ashen-grey hue as the rest of the building. The one window that was not barred up, showed the light which had cheered me. As I drew nearer, I perceived a great sign that was swinging and creaking above the road from the eaves. It was the creaking, indeed, that attracted my attention. Just at this moment the wind tore a black cloud overhead into tatters, and let down upon the house the last faint ghastly glimmer of daylight that remained in the air. In this way I was enabled to see that the sign was one of the curious, ancient pieces of wrought-iron work, which are used for the purpose of announcing a house of public entertainment in the south-eastern parts of Switzerland. An elaborately wrought hook, of colossal proportions, supported an oval ring, also richly wrought in grotesque arabesques. In the centre of this ring hung a non-descript effigy, which at first seemed to me as unreal as a heraldic griffin. But in a second or two I perceived that it clumsily represented a great bird, that swung slowly to and fro as the gusts of the Föhn moved its massive perch. Such ensigns as these are usually brightly gilt, but this one hung black and sombre overhead, its sable hue only diversified by some rusty weather-stains, of a dark blood-red. The house was an inn, then.

Farther on in the distance I could see the twinkling of other lights in the village, but they were still somewhat far away. The strange nervous sensation I had upon me made me long for some human companionship. This inn would doubtless serve me as well as another to pass the night in. I needed only bread, wine, and a bed to sleep in. Most of all I needed to hear the voice and to see the face of a fellow-creature, for the lonely vastness of the mountains was weighing on my spirits as I had never felt it before. I searched along the side of the house with its rows of shuttered casements, but saw no entrance. Round the corner of the building I found a triangular patch of garden. Here there was a short flight of wooden steps, ending in an external landing-place overhung by a porch. And beneath the porch was a door. I mounted the steps and pushed the door, which was ajar. It did not yield to my hand, and I found that it was prevented from opening entirely by a chain, or some other fastening within.

This precaution, unusual everywhere in these valleys, and almost unprecedented in a house of public entertainment, surprised me not a little, until I remembered the Föhn, which was rising in strength every minute, and made the shutters rattle, and the massive oaken door quiver as I stood there. I tapped with my alpenstock, and listened. For at least a minute there was dead silence. I had thought previously that I had heard a voice singing, or chanting in a measured cadence, but it might have been the wind, for now every sound had ceased.

This unusual stillness, instead of the movement and bustle I had expected in answer to my summons, made so unpleasant an impression on me, that I was moved by a sudden impulse to go away, and plod the other half mile or so to Falkenau. I had my foot on the ladder-like staircase to descend, when a footstep shuffled on the floor within the house, and the chain of the door was withdrawn. A light gleamed out on to the steps where I stood. Ashamed of my haste, I turned and stepped back beneath the porch, saying as I did so, "Why, I began to think all the folks were asleep in this inn! It is an inn, isn't it?"

"Ja wohl! The Raven."

The voice that answered me might have belonged to the raven itself, so harsh, and deep, and dissonant was it. But it came from a woman who stood holding the light low, so as to illuminate the steps, and shading her eyes with her hand, as she peered out at me.

"Can I sleep here?"

"Why not? Why not? Come in, my son. The Föhn is enough to blow us all away. It will be a wild night. Come in."

Her words were friendly and welcoming, though her voice was harsh. She was an elderly woman too, and her epithet "my son," applied to a lonely wanderer at her gate, pleased my fancy.

I went into the house, and she closed and locked and bolted the heavy door behind me.

"You are afraid of the wind?" said I.

"Yes; it is a bad wind, the Föhn. Go in, go in. Not that door! The door to the right."

I entered a low, wainscoted room. The panelling was of walnut wood. The ceiling was crossed by heavy beams, so low that I could easily touch them. The room was not sufficiently illuminated by the one flaring candle in my hostess's

hand, to enable me to see it very distinctly, but it seemed bare, and smelt close, and an ancient cobweb hung across one of the windows. A long table that ran down the centre of the room was quite bare.

"I suppose I can have a bed, and something to eat?" I said, rather doubtfully. My quarters so far did not promise very well.

"Why not? Why not? There is good entertainment at the Raven. The Raven is none of your new-fangled inns. It stood here before either of those gimcrack places down there at Falkenau was built. Aye, and before there was a road through the valley except for foot travellers, or, maybe, a pack mule."

She had set her candle down on the table, and I could now see her distinctly for the first time. She was a tall, lean woman, with tangled grey hair that fell in straight elf-locks. Her face was yellow, weather-beaten, furrowed with a hundred wrinkles. The features were flat, mean, and coarse. The under jaw projected, and when she spoke, she made hideous grimaces with an utterly toothless mouth. Two dark eyes glittering beneath a broad and not unintelligent forehead completed this physiognomy, which was certainly one of the most repulsive I ever saw. What her age might be, it was impossible to guess; for despite her grey hairs and toothless gums, she was upright, active in all her movements, and was altogether of a singularly vigorous and powerful frame, which contrasted startlingly with the furrowed, yellow face above it.

I stared at her in a kind of horrible fascination. Besides her natural ugliness, she was dirty and slovenly to an incredible degree. A man's jacket of dark cloth enveloped the upper part of her person, and was fastened tightly round her throat. The rest of her dress consisted of a ragged skirt of some cotton stuff, a black apron, and stout leather shoes. But I observed that she wore a pair of massive gold earrings which seemed to be antique, and of good workmanship. On her part she bore my gaze unflinchingly, and examined me in turn, with her keen bright eyes.

"Oh, you're a foreigner!" she said at length. "I didn't know at first, by your talk. You speak German well. I thought you might be some Bursch on your travels. Excusez!"

Her manner became more respectful, and at the same time she grinned and nodded to herself with an air of satisfaction.

"You have no objection to foreigners, I suppose!" said I, scarcely knowing what to say.

"Oh, objection! None in the world. The Raven used to see plenty of foreigners. Fine young gentlemen that wanted to climb the glacier yonder. Times are changed. New folks, new ways. We have enemies who speak against us. They wanted to buy this house, and turn it into a fine hotel! But we wouldn't consent. We will never consent to sell the old place. It has been in my family—I brought it in marriage to my husband—for more than a hundred years. After me—well, who knows? But whilst I live, nothing shall be changed here; nothing!"

"Can I have something to eat?" I asked, as soon as she passed.

Of course I could have something to eat! What should I like? Coffee? I accepted the suggestion and ordered coffee and bread and butter, and some cold meat, if any was to be had. Meanwhile, could I not see my bed-room? The landlady snatched up the candlestick again in her sinewy hand, and throwing open the door, she stepped into the passage and motioned me to follow. As we passed along the corridor, which was quite dark but for the flaring candle she carried, I heard again, coming apparently from the room at the end of the passage, which she had called to me not to enter when I first came into the house, a monotonous sound of chanting. I knew that it was customary among many of the more pious peasants of this Catholic district, to recite a litany in the evening, and that the whole household often joined in these exercises. I had paused to listen, for an almost imperceptible instant of time; but my hostess marked the pause, and seemed to hurry me onwards. As we ascended the stairs, she muttered something to the effect that I need not fear being disturbed.

"Oh, I am not afraid of being disturbed," I returned; "especially as it won't go on all night. They are saying their prayers downstairs, I suppose."

She shot a quick, queer glance at me, and nodded. All this time I had seen no one but this woman, and now the circumstance was accounted for. The rest of the household were, doubtless, at their evening devotions. The landlady stopped at a door in a long rambling passage on the first floor, which looked almost limitless in the dimness, and, taking a key from a bunch at her girdle, turned it with a visible effort

in the lock. The rusty iron creaked and jarred, as though it had not been touched for years, and, when the door at last turned on its hinges, there came forth a damp, mouldy smell from the chamber that sickened me, and a great moth, flying out, singed its wings in the candle-flame and beat itself blindly against my cheek.

"I can't sleep here!" I cried, starting back. "The place is like a cellar, or a churchyard."

She mumbled some words in an angry tone, and looked at me sullenly; but made no offer to move, or to show me another room. I asked if I could not have a bed elsewhere—anywhere—in a loft, on a truss of clean straw. I was not dainty, but I wished for air to breathe, and that room smelt like a charnel-house.

"Air!" said she, with a contemptuous toss of her ragged, grey head. "You shall soon have air enough!"

With that she darted at one of the windows, and, wresting its fastenings apart and scattering a cloud of dust around her in the process, she threw it wide open. It opened inward; otherwise, it could not have been opened at all, for outside were the heavy wooden shutters fast closed. But through the chinks of these the wind found its way with sufficient force to cause the door to bang to violently, and to make the candle flare and sputter. My hostess continued to mutter and mumble.

"It was a good room. What did I want? It was the best room in the house. As for air, people didn't usually leave doors and windows open when the Föhn was blowing. Foreigners didn't understand what the Föhn was. There was a beautiful bed, and sheets of the finest linen. What more could be desired?" As she spoke, she turned down the moth-eaten coverlet of the bed, and showed me the pillow. It was, in truth, of fine linen, and adorned at the edges with elaborate needle-work. The sheets, also, were fine and similarly ornamented; but they were absolutely clammy to the touch.

"This is, indeed, fine linen!" said I; "and the needle-work seems ancient and curious; but, to say the truth, a truss of dry straw would please me better. These sheets are not only damp but wet. Why, the bed cannot have been slept in for a twelvemonth!"

Perhaps my appreciation of her fine linen had mollified her; perhaps she recognised the justice of my objection. At all

events, she seemed to have recovered her temper, and promised, with alacrity, that she would substitute well-aired bedding for the damp sheets. Meanwhile, she would go and prepare my supper. Whilst I was eating it, the bed-room should be comfortably arranged. I asked for water and a towel. She went out into the dark passage, and quickly returned with an earthen pitcher, full of cold water, and over her arm a napkin of fine homespun damask. There was something quite inexplicable in the contrast between these stores of fine linen, and the dirt and squalor of her own appearance. After I had refreshed my face and hands with the water, I ventured to look round my chamber more closely than I had hitherto done. It was in a deplorable condition of decay and neglect. The plaster was falling from the ceiling, dust lay on all the furniture, which was literally falling to pieces; and yet, with strange incongruity, there were evidences everywhere of a kind of rustic wealth. A pair of candlesticks stood on the table; they were so tarnished as to be nearly black, but on examination they proved to be of silver. A crucifix was fastened to the wall at the head of the bed, and, on wiping away the coating of dirt and cobwebs which encrusted it, I found it to be a good specimen of ivory carving, evidently Italian; whilst the bracket which supported it was of fine inlaid woodwork. What could be the history of this house?

All was now absolutely quiet. From my room I could hear no sound, no voice, no movement, no token of human life. One thing was plain to me: whatever may have been formerly the case, the hostelry of the Raven was now deserted and forlorn. No traveller came there, except some chance wayfarer, like myself; and most probably I should never have entered its doors, but for the darkness which had partially concealed the appearance of the house from me. "I am thankful it is but for one night!" I exclaimed, half aloud, as I took up the candle and cast a last glance at my bed. I propped the heavy door open with a chair, in order that the draught from the window might sweep through the room, and purify its atmosphere.

I had exchanged my thick walking boots for light slippers, which I carried in my knapsack, so that I went along the passage and down the stairs with a perfectly noiseless tread. I should almost have been glad to hear my own footfall,

for the silence within the house was oppressive. It seemed to be heightened by the moan of the wind and the long, complaining creak of the iron Raven, swinging on his perch outside.

When I reached the ground-floor, I found a door open, which led to a yard at the back. By contrast with the black shadows and the yellow flare of the candle, the last twilight which lingered outside made all the objects which I could distinguish take a ghastly, bluish tint. By this light, or no light, I saw a figure cross the yard and come to the open door, near which I had paused. It bore a burden on its back, and moved slowly and heavily, as if oppressed by the weight. When it reached the door and the light of the candle fell on it, I saw that it was a woman, bearing on her back a large basket or creel, such as the peasants use hereabouts, full of firewood. Her head was bent down and I could not see her face; but her garments were so filthy, ragged, and wretched, that the hostess, had she stood near, would have seemed well-clothed by comparison. I moved, to let her pass, and she went by me without speaking or looking up, plodding straight onward, like a weary dumb beast of burden, and entered the room at the end of the passage. Immediately afterwards, the hoarse voice of the mistress of the house called me to supper, and I went into the long low room I had been in before.

The meal, such as it was, was set out at one end of the great, bare, dusty table. There was some fluid, that purported to be coffee, in a blackened tin pot; a jug of hot milk, tasting of wood-smoke; a shapeless lump of stale bread; some butter; and a slice or two of lean ham, swimming in fat. All the utensils were dirty and squalid. The food looked and smelt revolting; I could neither eat nor drink. The old woman stood by, eyeing me unfavourably. At length, in despair of making even a pretence of partaking of this loathsome fare, I asked if I could have some wine. I thought that I might swallow a crust of the coarse bread, if it were washed down with wine.

"If you can pay for it," answered the mistress of the Raven, curtly.

"Pay for it! I certainly do not expect to have what I call for, without paying."

"Ah, but it isn't cheap. We have some common wine of the country, but I can see it wouldn't suit you. You're dainty!"

I did not think it worth while to discuss

the point, and made no answer. She proceeded :

"There's a half-dozen or so of good wine left in the cellar; real good, it is. It has been under this roof three-and-thirty years. There's no such wine at Falkenau, I can tell you."

I ordered a bottle of this lauded vintage, and the woman puckered her horrible face into a smile, as she went off, key in hand, to get it for me. "You'll see," said she. "It is a real wonderful wine."

As soon as she was gone, I determined to satisfy a feeling of curiosity which had been growing on me, and to ascertain if there were any other human beings in the house, besides its mistress and the wretched creature I had seen bringing in wood. There was something indescribably strange about the whole air of the place; and I was urged by a strong impulse to explore that closed room at the end of the passage, which from its position in the house I concluded must be the kitchen. I pushed the door softly, and peeped in. The room was dark except for a dull glow on an open hearth at one end, and I heard no sound. After standing for a few seconds at the door, I returned to the eating-room and fetched the candle from the table.

By its light I saw a large stone-flagged kitchen. At one end was the old-fashioned open hearth I have spoken of, on which a wood fire smouldered. A few metal cooking utensils hung on the smoke-begrimed walls. All was sordid, dirty, and neglected as in the rest of the house. But presently, peering into the dim corners of the room, I saw two heaps of dun-coloured rags; and then another heap in the shadow by the hearth; and as I looked the heaps began to move, and a human hand came out of one of them, and shaded a pair of eyes that seemed to look at me.

I stood as if a strong grasp held me motionless. The silence and the stillness seemed to last a long time. At length the heap near the hearth rose up, and began to emit some inarticulate noises. It proved to be a lad, with the unmistakable stamp of cretinism on his grotesque countenance. He nodded and blinked at me, and then broke into an incoherent kind of monotonous song or chant, which I recognised as the sound I had heard before, muffled by the closed door. Upon this, one of the other figures advanced and shook him roughly by the arm, and he collapsed again into silence and his old crouching posture by the hearth.

"Don't hurt the poor creature!" I said in a low tone to the woman—it was a woman, the same I had seen carrying wood into the house. She did not turn, or notice me in any way, but went to a wood-heap in one corner, and taking a heavy billet in each hand, threw them roughly on to the hearth. Then, the third occupant of the kitchen arose, and turned on me a wolfish, haggard face, lit up by a pair of gleaming eyes. He was a young, strongly-built man, but so lean and gaunt, that he might have been represented by an artist as the embodiment of Famine. Neither did he speak, nor salute me by a gesture, but glared at me with a strange malignant stare.

I cannot describe the sensation of horror and bewilderment which came over me. I stood rooted to the spot, feeling almost as imbecile as the poor idiot who was crooning over the hearth, and unable to move away, until the sound of the hostess's returning footsteps seemed to break the spell, and I hurried off, unwilling that she should find me there, although I could scarcely account to myself for the unwillingness.

I had scarcely reached the eating-room again, before the old woman returned to it, bearing a common, cloudy-looking drinking glass in one hand, and in the other a bottle covered with dust and cobwebs. She nodded and mumbled with her toothless jaws as she drew the cork. I unceremoniously wiped the dim glass on a corner of the table-cloth, before filling it with a ruby-coloured liquid which sent a grateful perfume up my nostrils. The savour was equal to the smell. It was very fine old wine; Burgundy, and of a first-rate vintage. Under its generous influence I felt the nervous horror I had been suffering dissipated, as the sun dissipates a chill fog. My hands, which, despite the Föhn, had become icy cold, recovered their natural warmth, and I felt a delightful glow circulate through my veins. I could even bear to listen to my hostess's harsh voice, as she croaked on, her tongue apparently loosened by a glass of the mellow Burgundy which she accepted at my request.

She was a widow. Her husband had been a much-respected man, a member of the governing council of the district. He belonged, as she did herself, to one of the oldest families in that part of the country. They had had a good many trials and troubles, one way and another. And then

her husband died, and she kept on the old house by herself.

"But you don't live here quite alone," said I, thinking of the singular group in the kitchen. "You have some servants, or people, about the place."

She looked at me with a sudden, lowering defiance in her face. "What servants?" she asked, in deep angry tones.

"Nay, you should know better than I! But I saw a woman carrying in wood from the yard. And—and just now I peeped into the kitchen, having nothing else to do, and I saw a—a—hostler, or stable-boy, I suppose he was. And to say the truth, I thought them both very surly and ill-mannered. I wonder you care to live alone with such people."

She sat with her chin on her hand, and looked at me unwinkingly and searchingly for full a minute. Then she answered with perfect coolness, and as if I had spoken only the instant before:

"Oh, why not? They are very harmless creatures; only a bit shy and unused to strangers. Besides," she added with a grin that distorted her mouth and left her forehead frowning, "I'm not fanciful. It isn't easy to frighten me."

With an amount of watchful attention that I could well have dispensed with, she would not leave me again, until I went to rest, and insisted on lighting me upstairs to my room. I noticed that the door, which I had left propped open, was shut; and that when I turned the handle it opened noiselessly and easily, instead of creaking as it had done before.

"I oiled the lock," said the hostess, answering my look. "It wanted oiling."

I was in a much pleasanter frame of mind, as I undressed myself, than I had been in on first entering that chamber. The musty, sickening odours were nearly all gone, thanks to the draught of air I had established. Clean and dry linen was on the bed. I resolutely refrained from any further investigations into unswept corners, and shut my eyes to the cobwebs. Even the recollections of those three wretched-looking beings in the kitchen did not now produce so startling an effect on my imagination. In a word, the Burgundy had done wonders.

"What an absurdly nervous, hypochondriacal state I must have been in," said I to myself, as I placed the candle and some matches within reach, preparatory to getting into bed, "to be so upset by those folks downstairs. The cretin was not an

agreeable object, certainly, poor wretch! But, unfortunately, cretins are common enough in Switzerland. How the Föhn is rising! Well, Raven, black, creaking, and uncanny as you may be, your shelter is better than none on a night like this."

But I changed my opinion, by-and-by, as you will see.

The long day's tramp in the fresh air (not to mention the Burgundy) had made me so drowsy that I soon fell into a profound sleep. At first it was dreamless. But gradually broken and confused images formed themselves in my brain; and finally one face, the face of a dear lost parent, grew clear and distinct, and I was about to address it, when the word that was shaping itself on my dreaming mouth was suddenly yelled aloud, as it seemed, in my very ears, in a tone that made every nerve in my body quiver, and an ice-cold shudder run down me from head to foot.

"Mother!"

The sound had awakened me effectually. Whose could that terrible voice be, calling on the sacred name of mother with so blood-freezing a shriek? I listened in an anxiety that amounted to anguish, for a repetition of the cry; but for a long time no sound woke the stillness within, whilst, outside, the wind moaned and sighed in weird gusts.

I had almost persuaded myself that the voice had been the mere figment of my dreaming brain, when again came that hideous yell, "Mother!" And then confused screams, and laughter, and babble of inarticulate noises like a chorus of fiends.

I sprang out of bed and lighted my candle. The flame flickered in the gust of wind that blew through the crevices of the shutters. The heat was stifling, notwithstanding the violent movement of the air, which seemed to be blowing from a furnace. As I threw my clothes on with headlong speed, a thousand wild conjectures were darting through my brain, as to the cause of the horrible din which still continued, although with fluctuations from loud to low.

Suddenly the sounds ceased for a moment, and then almost immediately the screams recommenced. But now they had changed to cries of pain and half-stifled moans; and the floor of the room over my head was shaken by the trampling of feet, and then I heard and felt that some heavy body was being forcibly dragged across it.

Good God! what was happening in this horrible house? Was murder being com-

mitted? I remembered the wolfish malignant glare of the young man whom I had seen in the kitchen, and the sullen silence of the woman, and the thought came, almost with the force of a conviction, into my mind, that these two were attempting to kill the old woman their mistress. A violent struggle was going on, without doubt. I seized my alpenstock—no despicable weapon in case of need, with its iron ferule—and rushed to the door. It was locked!

For an instant I stood irresolute. It was now clear that some foul play had been deliberately planned, and that any possible interference on my part had been guarded against by imprisoning me in my room. Perhaps I was to be the next victim. My irresolution did not endure many seconds. I raised the alpenstock, and battered against the closed door with all the force I could command. The heavy panels resisted my efforts. The lock jarred, and shook, and quivered, but it held fast. I had not struck many strokes before I perceived that they were echoing through a silent house. The noise above had ceased. Once or twice I thought I could distinguish a low whimpering, as of some animal in pain; but otherwise all was still as death. I called aloud. There was no answer. I ran to the window and endeavoured to throw open the wooden shutter, with some half-formed idea of getting egress from the house in that way. The shutters were not merely fastened in the ordinary way, but nailed up. However, the wood was so rotten and worm-eaten, that, with a little exertion, I succeeded in wrenching the shutters open, and looking out into the night.

At first I was nearly choked and blinded by a cloud of dust. There was a moon nearly at the full, but the sky was so covered with clouds that her light only occasionally pierced through them here and there, as they were swiftly driven from south to north by the Föhn. That terrible wind was still blowing, and with hourly increasing violence. In addition to the noise made by the wind, I could hear the rush of the main stream running through the valley, and the impetuous dash of a side torrent that poured down the rocks behind the house, and in close proximity to it. The noise of this torrent was not only louder than it had been, but

there was a peculiar change in its tone, which I knew by experience indicated a very great increase in the volume of water. It occurred to me that if this stream should become much more swollen, retreat from the house might be rendered difficult, if not dangerous. As the thought passed through my mind, I heard in the distance the long wailing note of a horn.

It is the custom in these valleys, during the continuance of a Föhn, when sudden melting of snows may be expected, to have a man watching all night near dangerous points, such as the confluence of two mountain streams, to give notice by the sound of an Alp-horn to the inhabitants of lonely scattered dwellings, when the waters swell to a threatening height; so that the flood—if there come a flood—should not find them quite unprepared.

Thus I understood the significance of that warning note. I knew with what rapidity (incredible to those who have never witnessed it) the trickling threads of water which furrow the great mountains can grow to be raging torrents, pouring devastation into the lower lands. But I hailed the approach of the watchman (herald of evil tidings though he were) with a sensation of relief unspeakable. Within a few minutes I saw the glimmer of a lantern at a long distance down the road, and the Alp-horn sounded again—once, twice, thrice. I awaited the drawing near of the lantern with trembling impatience. The wind and the water roared and howled against each other like two furious, conflicting monsters, and made the dead stillness within the house more awful. What horror might not have been enacted in that room above? I cried out, and a long shudder ran through my body as some insect of the night brushed my forehead; and I could scarcely remove my eyes from the crumbling plaster of the ceiling, so possessed was I with the dread of seeing a ghastly, crimson rain drip horribly through its chinks!

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